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ABSTRACT

Building on previous investigations of the effects of team-organized instructional arrangements on elementary school teachers' sense of autonomy, this report reexamines data from 14 multiunit schools which still retained the team instructional plan at the end of the second year of implementation. Indicators measured were interdependent teaching arrangements, unit activeness (i.e., the extent to which members of a teaching unit assumed collective responsibility for management tasks) and principal and teacher-group influence. The central question the study sought to answer was why prior investigations of multiunit schools had failed to find marked declines in autonomy indexes as a result of the introduction of the plan. Three lines of inquiry were pursued. The first concerned the possibility that teachers in more active units, in schools where the plan had proceeded furthest, would be likely to suffer greater autonomy loss than those in units less affected by the innovation; however, this hypothesis was not supported. Next investigated was the possibility that the multiunit plan could bring to some high status teachers a central role in governing the work of the team and hence a high degree of autonomy that would cancel out autonomy losses among the rank and file; again, results were negative. The third inquiry concerned the possibility that with the development of a significant collegial group, teachers could gain autonomy enhancing benefits from the group that would offset the loss of freedom associated with collective control of teaching. The findings here indicated that autonomy feelings were the result of countervailing forces--an autonomy-depressing force associated with team control of classroom decisions or principal's surveillance, and an autonomy-enhancing force emanating from the ability of teacher groups to influence the educational affairs of the school. The tentative conclusion of the study is that teachers' feelings of autonomy did not decline in the multiunit schools primarily because such feelings were attached less strongly to the actual work relations among teachers than they were to the school's power and authority relations. Two reference pages and research measures are appended. (CJH)

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Individualism and Collectivism: Teacher Sense of Autonomy in the Multiunit Elementary School

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The work I report in this paper started from a puzzle. A number of sociologists have stressed the central importance to teachers of the discretion they traditionally have enjoyed in conducting affairs within the boundaries of the classroom--a discretion they jealously guard against the encroachments of supervisors and colleagues alike (Bidwell, 1965; Lortie, 1969, 1975; Pellegrin, 1976). One would expect, then, that teachers would experience a distinct loss of autonomy if they found themselves in a school setting committed to team-organized instructional arrangements. Yet, an early study by Meyer and Cohen (1971) gave precisely the opposite findings. Elementary teachers in a set of open-space schools formally organized into teaching teams reported greater autonomy in their teaching than teachers in a similar number of conventional schools chosen for comparison. Moreover, initial results of a longitudinal study of the Multiunit School that a group of us launched to extend the Meyer and Cohen investigation revealed no clear evidence of a reduction in feelings of autonomy among classroom teachers as a consequence of participating in the IGE/MUS innovation (Packard, Charters, & Duckworth, 1978).

In this paper I will describe the further analyses we have undertaken in search of clues to the puzzle. First, let me say a few words about that study. In the spring of 1974, my colleagues and I had located a number of elementary schools, mostly in the Eastern United States, that were intending to introduce the IGE Program in the coming fall, and we worked out arrangements to take measures of a variety of organizational attributes and teacher attitudes in these schools, beginning immediately before the start of program implementation. We would take measures, mainly by questionnaire and interview, every six months for the next two years--five waves of data

collection in all. We also arranged to take parallel measures according to the same schedule in a set of control schools typically chosen from the same school districts. While we had begun with a somewhat larger number of schools, at the end of the second year we had systematic information for 14 schools that were still implementing the Multiunit plan and for 13 control schools to furnish a comparison base.

Our initial analyses compared the Multiunit and control schools as sets, using two separate measures of autonomy feelings. Comparisons were made at the end of the second year, holding constant differences between the schools before implementation began. One series of analyses was based on the school as the unit of analysis, aggregating autonomy scores for school means; another series used the individual teacher as the unit of analysis, restricting the investigation to the cohort of teachers who had remained in the schools through the full two years. In only one of the several analyses we undertook was there a statistically significant difference between teachers in the Multiunit and control schools, and although the difference indicated a drop in autonomy in the team-organized schools as expected, the magnitude of the effect was small.

We considered three kinds of explanation in our more recent analyses. The first concerned the possibility that the earlier analyses were not sufficiently sensitive to differences among the Multiunit schools in the extent to which the IGE/MUS program had been implemented. We had made one test that scaled schools in the extent of change in their decision structures and teaching arrangements, but it was apparent in our data that there were important within-school variations. The units in the Multiunit schools differed widely in the extent to which they had developed as work groups

and the teacher-members had, indeed, moved out of the self-contained classroom and into interdependent teaching arrangements. Hence, one line of investigation we pursued was that autonomy loss was a function of the extent of programmatic implementation in the units to which the Multiunit teachers were assigned.

A second line we considered was the possibility that the unit organization advantaged certain teachers, especially the higher status members of the staff, but disadvantaged others. If the team organization created a hierarchy in which some were able to preserve or enhance their own freedom in teaching while other team members were obliged to play a subordinate role, the differential effects on autonomy scores could cancel one another out.

Finally, we considered the idea that the team organization might act in opposite ways to affect a teacher's feelings of autonomy--on the one hand to bring the teacher under the aegis of group decisions regarding the conduct of instruction but, at the same time, to furnish the teacher protection from outside constraints on freedom, especially from supervisory personnel, or to provide teaching opportunities ordinarily unavailable in the solitary situation. In short, the emerging power of the collegial group may bring benefits to teacher autonomy that off-set the costs.

Methods of Study

In these further analyses our interest was limited to teachers in the 14 Multiunit schools that still retained the plan at the end of the second year of implementation effort and we focused mostly on the conditions prevailing at that time, using measures from our fifth data-taking wave (T_5). In certain analyses we used the pre-implementation measures (T_1) for

comparison or control. Approximately 200 teachers served the base for the cross-sectional analyses, and about 100 were in the cohort who remained in the schools through the two full years and for whom before-after analyses were conducted. In this report the individual teacher is the unit of analysis, although as mentioned below, certain measures were derived to characterize the units to which the teachers belonged.

The schools, themselves, were a convenience sample of the several hundred around the country that were reported to have begun implementing the IGE/MUS plan in the fall of 1974 under sponsorship of The Wisconsin R & D Center in Cognitive Learning or I/D/E/A of the Kettering Foundation. They were highly heterogeneous with respect to staff size, grade organization, rural-urban location, per-pupil expenditure, and so on. Two were parochial schools of a Roman Catholic diocese, the rest public schools. Full descriptions are available elsewhere (Moser, n.d.; Packard, Charters, & Duckworth, 1978). While all had entered into formal agreement with IGE representatives to begin implementation, in return for which the schools would receive technical assistance from the representatives and associated agencies, there was no single blueprint of innovations that the schools followed. The particular curricular and instructional reforms they sought to introduce were nearly as heterogeneous as the schools themselves. The one feature they all shared, however, was the Multiunit structure: each grade-level teachers was assigned to a unit, or team, and the unit was charged with responsibility for planning and conducting instruction for the pupils under its jurisdiction. (Whether or not this responsibility was fulfilled was another matter.) There were a total of 55 units in the 14 Multiunit schools, ranging in size from two to seven members by typically

consisting of three or four teachers. All units had formal leaders, appointed or elected, and most schools had established an Instructional Improvement Committee--a coordinating council consisting of unit leaders and the principal--although it was not an especially significant body in some of the schools.

Measures

Only measures relevant to the present analyses will be described here, and these rather briefly. All but one was a summative scale based on teacher responses to questionnaire items, and several of the scales were taken unaltered from the previous investigation of Meyer and Cohen (1971), thereby enhancing comparability of findings. Teacher response rates to the questionnaires ranged from 90 to 96 per cent for the five data-taking waves.

Sense of work autonomy. Teacher feelings of work autonomy were measured in two ways. One was the Index of Individual Work Autonomy that Meyer and Cohen had used in their study, and the second was a 24-item Sense of Autonomy Scale that we constructed specifically for our study.

The Meyer and Cohen index was based on teacher responses to the question, "How much influence do you have over your own . . ."

(a) administration of school rules and regulations
(b) student grading practices
(c) curriculum planning
(d) teaching specific lessons or classes
(e) student control and discipline practices.

Response alternatives and their weights (shown in parentheses) were: "none" (1), "not very much" (2), "a moderate amount" (3), "a considerable amount" (4), and "a great deal" (5). A teacher's score was the mean weight over the five items. No score was calculated if the respondent omitted any item.

These questions, we should note, were part of a larger set which also asked about the influence of the principal and of colleague groups. (See below.)

Our own scale was based on the conceptualizations of Blauner (1964) and Lortie (1969) and was designed to tap teacher feelings regarding their freedom from work pressures, their control over the pace of work, freedom from surveillance by others, freedom to choose the techniques of work and to determine the criteria for assessing student performance. Using a six point, Likert-style response format, teachers reacted to questions such as these:

> Generally speaking, I feel as though the teaching techniques I can use in this school are closely controlled.
>
> On the whole, my students and I can establish the rhythm of daily activities rather than have it determined for us by people or events outside the classroom.

The full set of items is given in the paper appendix. Scores could range from 1.0 to 6.0, the higher value representing greater autonomy feelings. We calculated no score for teachers who omitted more than two of the 24 items. A special report on the Sense of Autonomy scale, its development and psychometric properties, was prepared by the research staff and can be obtained from Oregon's Center for Educational Policy and Management (Charters, 1978). Reliability of the scale, as estimated by Cronbach's Alpha was .90, and test-retest correlations at six-month intervals, ranged from .60 to .74.

The two measures were only modestly correlated, with coefficients in the neighborhood of .50. While they generally yielded similar results in parallel analyses, there were sufficient differences to suggest that they measured distinct aspects of autonomy, and for that reason we will report

results using both measures in this paper. We will refer to the Meyer and Cohen measure as the Autonomy Index and our own as the Sense of Autonomy Scale.

Interdependent teaching arrangements. The extent to which classroom teachers were engaged in a system of interdependent teaching arrangements with their colleagues was a key measure of the initial study. The basic data came from records kept by teachers for ten consecutive school days regarding which pupils they taught in which subjects each day. The records could be assembled to reveal "pupil flows" between teachers and to reconstruct the various ways in which teachers pooled their resources to instruct pupils under their aegis. While we developed several measures of task interdependence from these data, for present purposes we limit ourselves to a simple indicator of the presence or absence of interdependence, distinguishing teachers who remained in the self-contained classroom pattern from the remainder. Specifically, the measure hinged on whether or not the teacher taught at least some pupils in common with another grade-level teacher at any time during the two-week period of record keeping. If the teacher did, he or she was coded 1 and otherwise 0.

Unit activeness. Our study was not originally designed to evaluate IGE or judge the extent of its implementation in the Multiunit schools and, hence, no comprehensive measures were developed for that purpose. Nevertheless, information was available that seemed indicative of variations in implementation of certain aspects of the IGE/MUS plan. One measure we use in this report concerned the extent to which unit members assumed collective responsibility for managerial responsibilities. Teachers were given a list of five school management tasks: supervising aides, supervising new teachers,

scheduling special subject teachers, grouping students for instruction, and determining teaching schedules. They were asked where the responsibility for each task lay--with the principal, a committee, "team" leaders, "team" members jointly, or individual teachers. For each teacher, the proportion of tasks was computed for which team members jointly were said to be responsible, and this proportion was averaged over all members of the unit to provide an index of Unit Activeness. The score could vary from 0 to 1, i.e., from no tasks managed jointly to all tasks managed jointly. For purposes of the present analyses, we averaged the Unit Activeness scores from the fall and spring data-taking waves of the second year (T_4 and T_5) for a single value.

Units that were active by this criterion also tended to be those in which high proportions of the members were involved in interdependent teaching arrangements with their fellows, although the correspondence was far from perfect. (It was apparent that members of a unit could assume collective responsibility for management tasks without, at the same time, constituting themselves as a team for the purpose of conducting classroom instruction.) The Unit Activeness index, averaged for the units in a school, also correlated moderately with a measure of the collegiality of the school's decision structure, a somewhat different indicator of conformity with the IGE/MUS plan. These school-level correlations ranged from about .40 to .60, depending on the year and the particular measure of decision structure.

Principal and teacher-group influence. The Meyer and Cohen study had used a set of questions to index the distribution of power in the school, especially as regards the relative influence of collegial groups and the

school's administrative officer--the principal. The questions asked about two distinct kinds of influence: those that come to bear on the teaching behavior of the individual teacher within his or her own classroom and those that have the effect of shaping educational policies in the school. We repeated these questions in our own investigation.

With respect to the first kind, the questions paralleled those asked in connection with the Autonomy Index. Teachers were instructed to rate the amount of influence of the principal and of teacher groups on the same five task areas. Specifically, the questions asked:

> How much influence do school committees, teams, or teacher groups (e.g., similar grade level, subject area) have over your own . . .

and

> How much influence does the principal have over your own . . .

The response categories were the same as before, ranging from "none" to "a great deal," and as before we calculated the average weight of influence over the five areas to arrive at scores representing the teacher's report of principal and teacher-group influence over teaching performance.

A similar approach was used to measure the distribution of influence with respect to larger educational policies. Teachers were asked to report the amount of influence exercised by teacher groups and the principal over five policy issues of the school. Concerning teacher group influence, for instance, the question asked, "How much influence do school committees, teams, or teacher groups (e.g., similar grade level, subject area) have over . . ."

> determining the educational goals and objectives of the school
> establishing school rules and regulations
> general curriculum planning
> student grading practices
> student control and discipline practices

Scores were obtained in an identical fashion to the preceding influence questions.

For purposes of the present analyses, we took the additional step of averaging these influence scores for members of units in order to achieve an index characterizing the unit as a whole. The use of unit means, we assumed, would reduce the psychologistic bias that might otherwise inhere in correlations between influence indicators and sense of autonomy scores.

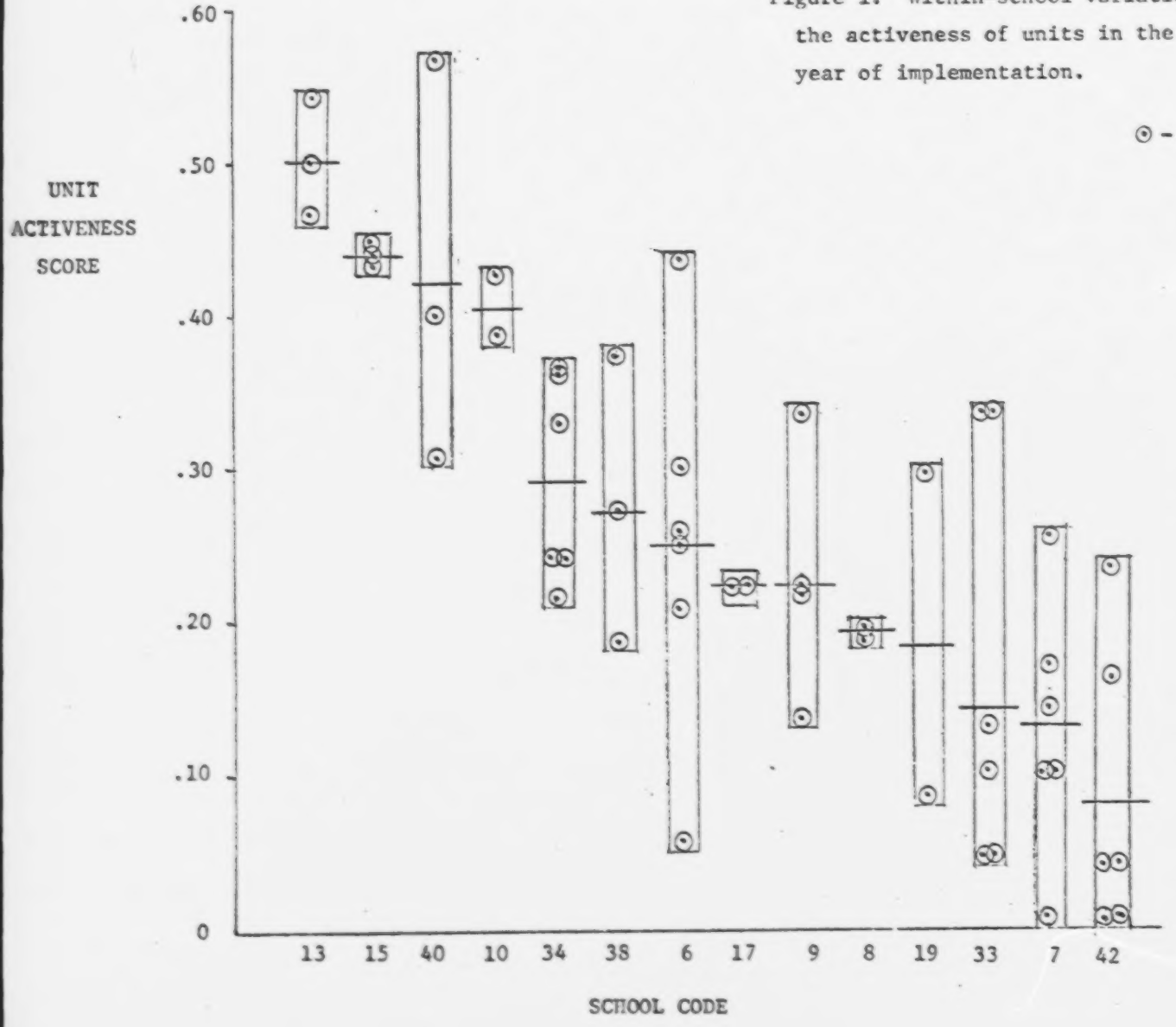
Results

Autonomy Loss and Extent of Implementation

One way of understanding our earlier failure to demonstrate important declines in teacher feelings of autonomy in the team-organized work settings was on what might be considered methodological grounds; we did not take account of the fact that the Multiunit plan was not evenly implemented across all schools and sectors of schools of the study. The Unit Activeness index showed wide variations in the extent to which unit members were, indeed, acting as a collectivity with regard to managerial tasks in the second year of implementation. Figure 1 displays the impressive differences, in some cases even within a particular school. Six of the 55 units had scores indicating the total absence of collective responsibility. Four of the 55 units, on the other hand, had scores indicating that units were responsible for three of the five managerial tasks. (Hardly any units supervised new teachers or set the schedule of special-subject teachers, tasks almost invariably handled by the principal.) In School 6, four of the six units would be regarded as essentially inactive, while two had Unit Activeness scores above the top quarter of all units, and similarly notable within-school differences can be seen for the units of School 33 and 40. Generally, the within-school differences in implementation, at least by this criterion, were more impressive than the between-school differences.

Figure 1. Within-school variations in the activeness of units in the second year of implementation.

⊙ - Unit



Is it the case, then, that teachers in the more active units, where implementation had proceeded further, were more likely to have suffered loss of autonomy than theachers in the units which had remained relatively unaffected by the innovation? A test of the possibility entailed a hierarchical multiple regression procedure conducted on the teacher cohort for whom both "pre" and "post" measures were available. Their "post" autonomy scores were regressed, first, on the "pre" scores and then on the measure of Unit Activeness. We included in the regression at this point the indicator of the kind of teaching arrangement in which the teacher was engaged, dummy coded as 1 for interdependence and 0 for independence, in recognition of the fact that even within active units one or two teachers sometimes remained apart from the team organization. The critical observation in the regression analysis was whether the latter two predictors--Unit Activeness and Teaching Arrangement--explained a significant additional proportion of the variance in the "post" autonomy scores beyond that explained by the "pre" values and, if so, whether their regression weights were negative, indicating a depressive effect on autonomy. The regression analyses are presented in Table 1, separately for the two measures of autonomy.

The analyses yield no evidence that teacher feelings of autonomy were depressed according to the extent of program implementation. The two indicators of teacher engagement in the team organization plan accounted for less than 1 per cent of the variance in the Sense of Autonomy Scale scores and about 3 per cent of the variance in the Autonomy Index, neither proportion significant at the .05 confidence level. Even if we regarded the proportions of explained variance as differing from chance, the beta weights would indicate that autonomy feelings were higher, the greater the extent of implementation, not lower. Thus, this avenue of inquiry was unproductive in clues to the puzzle.

Table 1. Regression Analysis for the Effect of Unit Activeness on Teacher Autonomy Scores at T_5, with T_1 Autonomy Constant: Teacher Cohort in 14 Multiunit Schools.

Dependent	Independent	Beta	R^2	R^2 Increment	F	df
Sense of Autonomy Score, T_5						
	Autonomy, T_1	.477	.2272	--		
	Unit Activeness	.047	.2294	.0022	.275	1/98
Autonomy Index, T_5						
	Autonomy, T_1	.233	.0638	--		
	Unit Activeness	.150	.0857	.0219	2.211	1/92

Differential Advantage of the Team Organization

It seemed plausible that the advent of the team organization plan could bring particular advantage of certain teachers in the school whose status and influence allowed them to play a central role in governing the work of the team, with the possible consequence that gains in feelings of autonomy among them would cancel out losses in autonomy among the rank-and-file teachers. Meyer and Cohen, in their original study, had entertained such an interpretation and had reported tabulations that seemed to support the idea of a polarizing effect (1971, pp. 59-62).

We investigated the possibility using two indicators of teacher status. In one set of analyses we compared the level of autonomy between unit leaders and unit members and in the other we compared relatively experienced teachers with novices. The question was not just whether autonomy feelings were stronger among the higher status teachers but, more crucially, whether the polarization were greater in units where the implementation had proceeded furthest. That is, was the relationship (if any) between teacher status and autonomy contingent on unit activeness? Our operational test was a multiple regression procedure in which teacher autonomy scores were regressed on one or the other status variable (dummy coded 1 for unit leader, 0 for unit member or 1 for veteran teacher, 0 for novice teacher), the Unit Activeness score and the status variable. The increment in the variance explained by the interaction term was the crucial observation in the analysis. We conducted the regressions, in this case, on the entire complement of Multiunit teachers at T_5, not limiting it to the cohort as previously.

Table 2 gives a summary of the regression analyses. The overall R^2's indicate that the predictor variables taken together accounted for virtually none of the variance in autonomy scores--less than two per cent, at best. This was true for both indicators of teacher status and both measures of autonomy. Hence, there was no point in examining the interaction term alone with respect to its contribution to the explanation of variance. The results demonstrate that high and low status teachers did not differ significantly in their levels of autonomy in the first place and that whatever differences there may have been certainly were not accentuated in the more active units. We must, therefore, discount the differential impact hypothesis as the solution to the puzzle.

Off-setting Effects of Collegial Group Power

The third line of investigation we pursued concerned the possibility that the development of a significant collegial group was a two-edged sword, insofar as the member's autonomy was concerned. The teacher could conceivably gain certain autonomy-enhancing benefits from the group that would off-set the loss of freedom associated with collective control of classroom teaching. When Meyer and Cohen discussed their findings of strong feelings of autonomy in the team-organized than conventional schools, they suggested that their measure of autonomy, like the concept itself, might have had two distinct meanings. Reports of one's own influence over teaching activities could reflect the teacher's isolation from external pressures or constraints, on the one hand, or they could reflect the teacher's feelings of personal efficacy in organizing and planning the work of teaching, on the other (Meyer & Cohen, 1971, pp. 56-59). In this way, the collegial group might have emerged as a significant political entity in the school, able to

Table 2. Regression of Teacher Autonomy Scores at T_5 on Indicators of Teacher Status and Unit Activeness in 14 Multiunit Schools.

	Beta	
Independent	Sense of Autonomy Scale	Autonomy Index
Unit leadership[a]	.126	.108
Unit activeness	.018	.078
Interaction[b]	-.066	-.010
R^2	.006	.018
F	.362	1.174
df	3/191	3/195
Experienced teacher[c]	.225	-.008
Unit activeness	.094	.088
Interaction[c]	-.121	-.002
R^2	.019	.008
F	1.203	.514
df	3/191	3/195

[a]Unit leader coded 1, nonleader 0.

[b]Product of unit leader code and unit activeness score.

[c]Greater than three years in school coded 1, three years or less coded 0.

[d]Product of experience code and unit activeness score.

command resources necessary forteaching and thereby afford its members with broadened personal control over the classroom environment.

Some general observations are in order about the development of collegial power in the schools we studied. Our initial analyses showed that teacher groups had not emerged as anything near the significant entities they had in the open schools of the Meyer and Cohen study. Ratings of collegial influence in the Multiunit schools were well below ratings in the open schools, especially for the measure of group influence on educational policy. Moreover, our comparisons of the Multiunit and control schools demonstrated a statistically significant gain in teacher group influence over the two-year period only with regard to influence over teaching performance; collegial influence on educational policy did not change significantly. Analysis showed that the power of collegial groups almost invariably was subordinated to that of the principal. In only one Multiunit school did the mean rating of teacher group influence (over educational policy) exceed the rating of the principal's influence, and that was due not to the unusual development of the group but to the unusually low status of the principal in that school.

We also noted in our initial analyses of principal influence ratings that principals in the Multiunit schools apparently responded quite variably to the introduction of the new organization. Some principals were seen as maintaining or increasing their prior levels of influence, while others were seen as essentially withdrawing their involvement. This variability was most pronounced with respect to the principal's influence on teaching performance in the classroom.

Our test of the off-setting hypothesis consisted of regressing teacher autonomy scores on the mean ratings of teacher-group influence over educational policy and over teaching performance--the means based on the unit of which the teacher was a member. If the hypothesis were tenable, we would expect that feelings of work autonomy would be negatively associated with the level of collegial influence on classroom teaching but positively associated with the level of the group's influence on school policy. We included the two parallel measures of principal influence in the regression. The results are shown in Table 3.

The results differ somewhat for the two measures of autonomy, but they agree concerning the strong positive association between autonomy and teacher-group influence on educational policy. Teacher feelings of autonomy were clearly enhanced in units where the collegial group was regarded as powerful in affecting general school policies. The negative impact of collegial influence over teaching performance was shown for the Sense of Autonomy scale but not for the Meyer and Cohen Autonomy Index; the latter measure was more sensitive to the principal's influence on teaching performance. Irrespective of the details, the pattern of the data indicate that autonomy feelings were the resultant of countervailing forces--an autonomy-depressing force associated with either team control of classroom decisions or the principal's surveillance of teaching performance and an autonomy-enhancing force emanating from the ability of teacher groups to influence educational affairs of the school. While we don't present the data, we can report that the same general pattern emerged in similar analyses of control schools as well as in the Multiunit schools prior to their reorganization.

Table 3. Regression of Teacher Autonomy Scores at T_5 on Unit Means of Principal and Teacher-Group Influence Ratins in 14 Multiunit Schools.

	Beta	
Independent	Sense of Autonomy Scale	Autonomy Index
Teacher-group influence on teaching performance	-.227*	-.034
Teacher-group influence on educational policy	.403*	.328*
Principal influence on teaching performance	-.172	-.208*
Principal influence on educational policy	.055	.012
R^2	.130*	.133*
F	7.5737	7.8176
df	4/203	4/203

*Significant beyond the .05 level by the relevant F test.

We undertook a further investigation in an effort to understand specifically how collegial groups acted to enhance autonomy feelings. Among other things, we thought that the groups might serve a protective function, shielding teachers from the arbitrary intrusion of supervisory personnel into the intimate details of classroom teaching. We reasoned that teacher autonomy feelings would be inversely related to the principal's inclination to oversee teaching performance, but only in the absence of a powerful colleague group. If the colleague group were powerful, the principal's proclivity toward close supervision would not depress autonomy. Operationally speaking, we hypothesized that the effects of principal influence over teaching performance and teacher-group influence over educational policy would be interactive in their relationships with autonomy scores. The appropriate regression analysis entailed the regression of autonomy scores on the two influence measures separately and then on an interaction term comprised of the product of the two measures. A significant increment in explained variance as a consequence of introducing the interaction term in the hierarchical regression would signify the tenability of the hypothesis.

We made the test separately for the two autonomy measures for the data collected both a T_1 and T_5. The interaction term was not significant at the .05 level for the Sense of Autonomy Scale at either time, but it was for the Autonomy Index at both times. Table 4 reports the analysis details for only the Autonomy Index at T_5. In Figure 2 we have graphed the regression surface as evaluated from the equation in Table 4 to illustrate the form taken by the interaction. That form coincides with expectations based on the idea of a protective function: the principal's strong exercise of

Table 4. Regression Analysis for the Interactive Effect of Teacher-Group Influence over Educational Policy and Principal Influence over Teaching Performance (Unit Means) on the Index of Individual Autonomy at T_5.

Independent	b	R^2	R^2 Increment	F	df
Teacher-group influence, educational policy	-1.114	.0923			
Principal influence, teaching performance	-1.656	.1383			
Interaction[a]	.475	.1665	.0282	6.6990	1/198
Constant	7.876				

[a]Product of two influence measures.

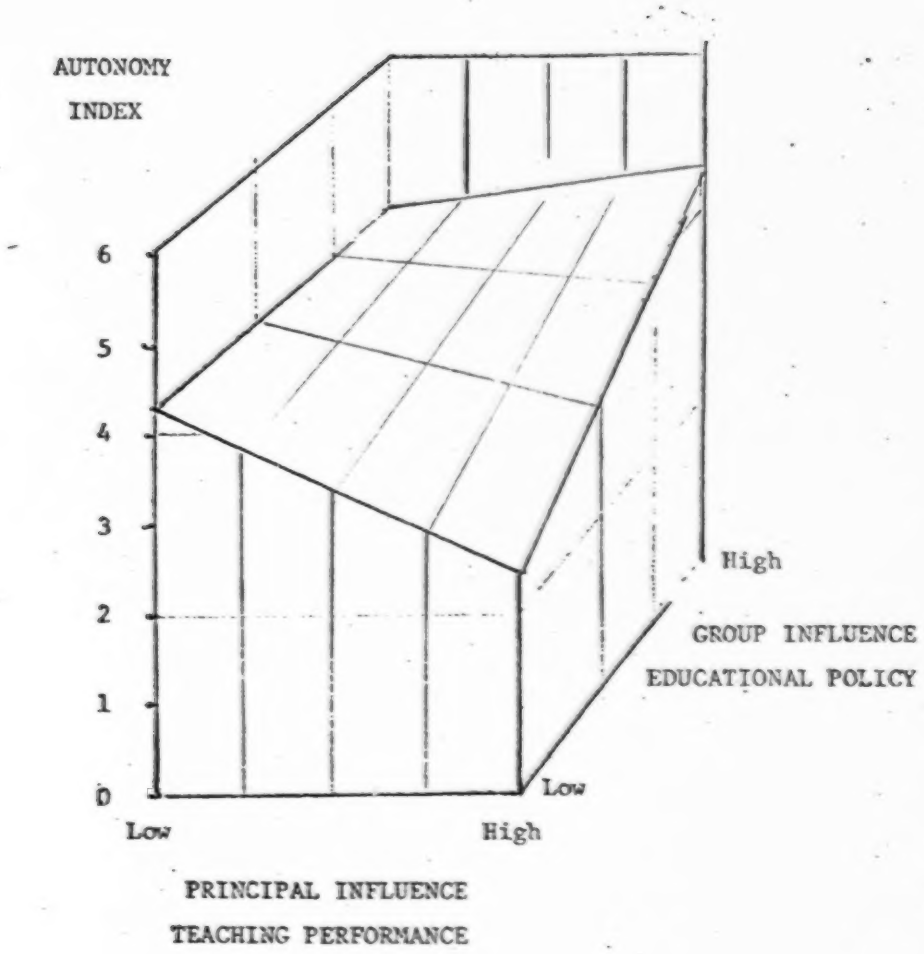


Figure 2. Regression surface for the interactive effect of principal and teacher-group influence on teacher autonomy.

influence over teaching performance had the effect of reducing teacher feelings of autonomy only when the collegial group wielded little influence over affairs of the school. When collegial group power was high, variation in the strength of the principal's influence did not affect autonomy feelings.

Discussion

The analyses we have undertaken have brought us to a tentative resolution of the puzzle with which we began. The resolution reaffirms two rather discrete sociological perspectives on the nature of teaching and the character of social processes in complex organizations. Our initial formulation of the problem--the surprise we expressed concerning the failure to find marked declines in autonomy indexes as a result of the formation of teaching teams in the schools under investigation--was based on interpretations of teaching that have emphasized the primacy for the teacher of his or her relationships with students. The rewards the teacher gains from interactions with colleagues are said to pale in comparison with those that arise within the context of the classroom. Lortie, in particular, has stressed the centrality of individualism and autonomy in the ethos of the teaching career, tracing them to fundamental structural characteristics of the occupation (Lortie, 1969, 1975).

> [Teachers] want a degree of boundedness around their classrooms; they cathect them, not the organization at large. They want more potentially productive time with students. They depict other adults as intrusive and hindering, and they yearn for more resources as they try to influence their students. . . . Teachers talk about collegial relationships in much the same way as other relationships; they are ancillary to the main theater--the classroom. There is no flavor here of "solidarity forever" or comradeship. One senses little commitment to the occupation and its fate (1975, pp. 201 et passim).

Our data are partially consistent with this view. Teachers' feelings of autonomy were lower in the degree that colleagues, or the principal especially, sought to exert influence over their performance of the core tasks of the profession. We did not find, however, that the mere fact of involvement with colleagues in interdependent teaching arrangements affected autonomy feelings significantly. It would seem, as we have suggested elsewhere, that the sort of team teaching that arose in the schools of the study was rarely of the highly intensive variety depicted in the literature. The team relationships, rather, tended to be volunaristic, short-lived, and not intimately collaborative--as though teachers were, indeed, guarding their freedom from interference.

Our data bear on another sociological perspective of long standing, this one pointing to what once was called the "informal organization" (Iannaccone, 1964). Sustained human association in any collaborative enterprise, the school included, inexorably spawns informal groups--groups which may, among other things, represent elements in the school's small-scale political system, providing members with collective means of promoting or defending their common interests. Few schools are without such groups, sometimes only loosely formed and barely discernible perhaps in seating patterns in the lunchroom or at staff meetings. Sometimes, especially in larger schools, the groups are widely acknowledged--"the old-timers," "the boiler-room crowd," and so on--and play a more manifest role in shaping the course of events. In the present case, teacher groups were deliberately defined and legitimized by the Multiunit innovation. Units were charged with policy-making responsibilities and members were furnished the time and place to express their collective interests and concerns. Even if the

members did not coalesce as intimately collaborating teams for conducting classroom instruction per se, it would not be surprising to find them, or some of them, developing as centers of power. The teachers collectively could do what they could not do individually or informally--gain greater command over the resources needed for teaching and seek accommodation with the administrative bureaucracy on matters of concern. That so-called teaching teams serve political functions has been observed in other studies. In his case study of differentiated staffing, for instance, Reynolds (1972) noted that the teacher groups which had been formed as teaching teams principally directed their energies toward moderating the plans for change so vigorously promoted by the staff of the innovative project. Jones (1973) found in the elementary school he investigated that the special subject teachers insisted on forming themselves into a team, as the regular grade-level teachers were, not for the purpose of conducting instruction jointly but rather to assure that their interests, too, would have representation in the faculty council.

Our finding that feelings of work autonomy increased with the influence of collegial groups over educational affairs of the school is consistent with the idea of autonomy not only as freedom from external interference but as personal efficacy in carrying out one's job, an efficacy extended by the power of the collectivity to control the resources desired or required by its members.

We conclude with the following tentative answer to the puzzle. Teacher feelings of autonomy did not decline in the Multiunit schools of our study--or, at least, did not decline substantially--primarily because such feelings were attached less strongly to the actual work relations among teachers than

they were to the school's power and authority relations. Autonomy was importantly jeopardized by administrators who supervised closely the classroom performance of teachers, but the jeopardy was off-set by a powerful colleague group. That same group enhanced autonomy in a different sense, by providing opportunities in teaching and extending personal power in a way that could not be realized by solitary arrangements. Changes that occurred in the Multiunit schools were not all of one piece, at least not with regard to the various factors that determine autonomy. While the net effect was to give the overall level of autonomy the semblance of constancy, underlying it was the operation of vital countervailing social forces.

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Appendix A

Items for the Sense of Autonomy Scale

FEELINGS TOWARD WORK

For the following items please indicate the extent to which each describes your feelings about your work in this school.

1. On the whole, my students and I can establish the rhythm of daily activities rather than have it determined for us by people or events outside the classroom.

2. Generally speaking, I believe I can pretty well decide my own pace of work as a teacher.

*3. Much of the time I feel pressed by the daily schedule.

4. In my present job I feel relatively free to decide how fast to cover instructional material with my students.

*5. Curriculum guides exert an uncomfortable influence on what I teach.

*6. I sense pressure from the administration concerning how I spend my time during the day.

*7. In this school a teacher has to look busy when he is on duty, even when there is nothing urgent to do.

*8. I am so tied down to the classroom that I would find it hard to take a short break from the kids, even if I really needed to.

9. Aside from things which lie in myself, there is little that holds me back from doing a good job of teaching.

*10. I simply cannot find the time I need in this school to do the kind of teaching I know I am able to do.

11. I feel as though I can pretty well decide what youngsters I will work with in my classroom.

*12. I rarely have a chance to use the teaching methods I think work best for me.

13. I feel free to try out new teaching ideas with my classes.

*14. Generally speaking, I feel as though the teaching techniques I can use are closely controlled in this school.

15. School funds permitting, I believe I am perfectly free to use whatever instructional materials I think will work with my classes.

*16. This school exerts an excessive influence on the discipline measures I can use in the classroom.

*17. I would have uneasy feelings if I gave unusually high (or low) grades to my classes, even though I had sound reasons of my own for doing so.

*18. I feel I have little say over how the progress of my students is to be judged.

19. I am confident that the principal trusts my judgment when it comes to evaluating class performance of students.

*20. I feel that in this school I must abide by someone else's ideas on how I should grade my own students.

21. This is one school, at least, in which I do not feel as though someone were peering over my shoulder at the way I teach.

22. I feel free to say whatever I wish to my pupils in the classroom.

*23. I must constantly be on guard around here against doing or saying the wrong things in my teaching.

*24. A lot of the time I have the idea that other teachers want to find out what I am doing in my classroom teaching just so they can judge me.

*Reversed scoring

Response Alternatives

Strongly agree
Agree
Moderately agree
Moderately disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree